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17 February 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

In my memorandum of 23 April 1971, I informed you that I had taken certain actions with respect to providing guidance in the field of protection of classified intelligence information, including that bearing on intelligence sources and methods, in response to your memorandum of 21 December 1970. I noted that I had issued detailed guidelines on this subject through the United States Intelligence Board, and that these had been concurred in by all the addressees of your December 21st memorandum.

Each member of the USIB has now reported to me on his implementing actions. These actions include strengthening existing controls on classified material, reviewing indoctrination procedures, reducing the number of clearances, and similar constructive measures. Special attention has been given to establishing procedures whereby the appropriate intelligence chief is consulted whenever it is proposed to issue public statements which may reveal sensitive intelligence information. In these cases, the intelligence chief is expected to assess the risks involved and to devise methods to protect the source of such information.

I believe these strengthened controls and indoctrination procedures will reduce the risk of unauthorized disclosure and I will, of course, continue to monitor closely these actions by the community on your behalf. I am very concerned, however, about our ability to control the deliberate leaks of highly sensitive information that continue to occur. One of the most recent, and in my opinion one of the most serious, is last week's article in THE WASHINGTON POST by Michael Getler which describes much of the capability and operational details of the real-time satellite

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program you approved for development last summer. As you will recall from your conversations with Dr. Land and others, this system goes to the frontiers of available technology in order to provide dramatic improvements to our reconnaissance capability. Consequently, I am relatively certain that a reporter could not come up with so sophisticated an article simply by putting together bits and pieces of information accumulated from various inadvertent disclosures. I believe the complete substance had to be provided him by someone with a good understanding of the whole system. And may I add that there are only a handful of people in government and industry who do have this understanding. It may never be entirely possible to prevent deliberate leaks of this nature, particularly when a cleared individual is determined to pass classified information in support of his own or institutional interests. But certain I am that continual public boasting about our satellite reconnaissance capability will not only invite but guarantee Soviet countermeasures which may well put in jeopardy our capacity to verify any SALT treaties or agreements. A reference by you to this point at a Cabinet or NSC meeting would be most helpful.

(Signed) Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

RHelms/ecd - 17/2/72

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